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# ART NEEDLEWORK

## OLD EMBROIDERIES.



WE present herewith three interesting illustrations of Italian and English embroideries of fifteenth and sixteenth century styles, exhibited some time ago in London. The small figure in the margin represents a triple wall-pocket, done on canvas, with a groundwork of silver, on which bouquets are embroidered in silk. The style is Italian of the sixteenth century. The cushion has a ground of red velvet on which are large circles of gilt worsted, decorated with bouquets, in appliqué of red silk embroidered with gold. The

uncovered portions of the red velvet ground are embroidered with small bouquets in gold. This cushion is English work of the fifteenth century. The box for the host is in red velvet, richly embroidered with couchings of gold and silver. The design is a chalice surrounded by sprays of foliage. This rich example of embroidery is Italian work of the sixteenth century.

## NEEDLEWORK NOVELTIES.

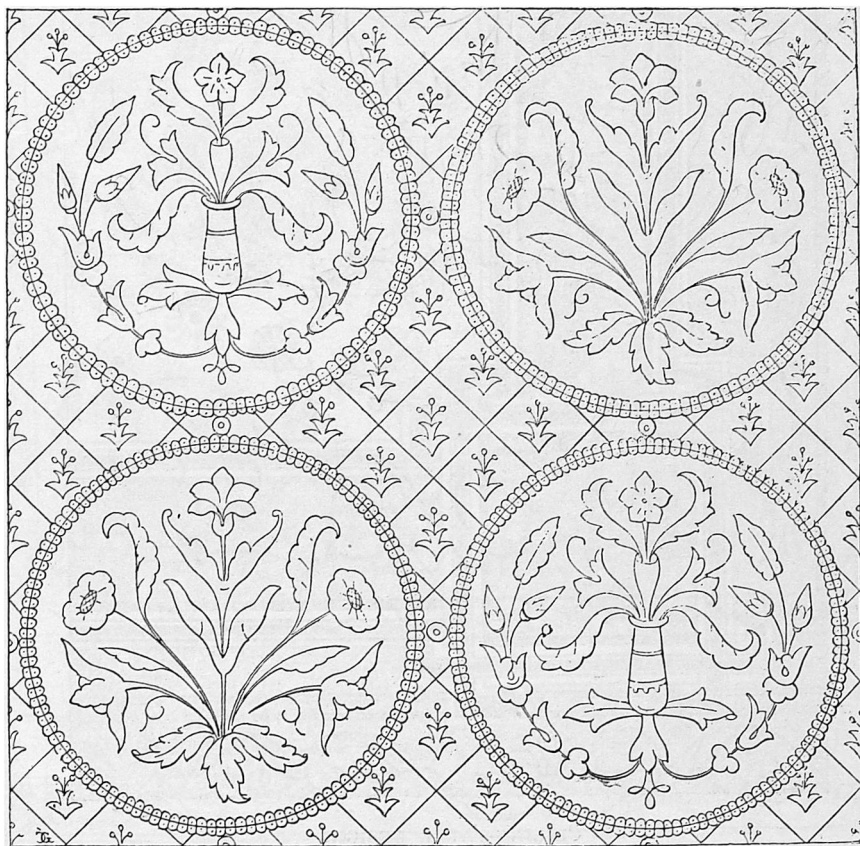
FOR plush or velvet furniture-covering, a rich effect may be gained by transferring to it the sprays worked in gold thread and edged with gold couching, which have heretofore been most generally used in ecclesiastical embroidery. The sprays should be worked on a strong foundation secured in one of the small round hand-frames with double hoops, then cut out, and sewed upon the plush. A curtain band of dull blue velvet has been decorated in this way, and applied to a drapery of old-gold stuff, with excellent effect. Cushions, chair-backs, and table-covers are all adapted to this class of ornament, which has been employed in several beautiful drawing-rooms, recently furnished.

A mirror-frame, recalling some of those still to be found in old curiosity shops abroad and occasionally here, is made of old-gold satin, decorated with the new French ribbon-work. For this, the narrow ribbons come on spools, and are delicately tinted and shaded. Flowers, such as forget-me-nots and roses, are made by drawing through the satin ground a loop of ribbon, and catching it down in the desired shape. Stems and arabesques are worked in fine chain-stitch like old tambour-work. The quaintness of this art especially recommends it for a replica of the antique, and a gilded chair of the Louis XVI. period has been most appropriately clad in a covering so adorned. In working a mirror-frame on satin, an embroidery-frame is necessary, and the work, when complete, is sent to an experienced frame-maker to mount.

Appliqués of plush, becoming daily more fashionable, are employed upon satin sheeting for table covers or for curtain bands. The usual method is to work a continuous scroll as a border, the edges finished with a couching of crewel and filoselle. The acanthus leaves of some Renaissance borders look well, as also pomegranates, cacti, amaryllis, or any boldly drawn flowers. Fruit, such as oranges and pomegranates, can be simulated by long-piled plushes, the stems worked in crewel, the flowers in silk, and the foliage, half appliqué, half work. Painting on velvet is even employed to shade the fruit and flowers in appliqué. Figures for

panels are made of satin appliqué, on a ground of olive silk or satin. For these gold thread, spangles, bullion and "passing," are judiciously used in adornment.

Darned-in backgrounds are decidedly the fancy of the hour, and screens, panels, portières, and tidies are adorned in this fashion. Those who have not seen the original specimens of the darned work of Queen Anne's time on coarse twill or Bolton sheeting, of which there are many to be found in England, nor yet the beautiful screen of ivory satin darned in old-gold silk, throwing in relief a pattern outlined in blue, which was admired at the spring exhibition of the New York Society of Decorative Art, may ask how this is done. The design, which is stamped or drawn upon the material, is worked in twisted chain-stitch with heavy Dacca silk. Then the ground is entirely covered with long parallel lines of ordinary darning-stitches, in silk of a contrasting color. Sometimes these stitches, which are akin to laid-work, are taken in wavy lines; sometimes the threads are caught in little bunches. In grounding the study of an artichoke plant recently, small arrow-head stitches were taken, suggesting the seed of the plant.



ENGLISH CUSHION OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

Passion flowers, large lilies, grapes with leaves and tendrils, hydrangea, horse chestnut, all look well when outlined against a darned-in background. It is best to use one color only for the design, which should therefore be conventional. Bolton sheeting is oftenest used for crewel darning, and for tidies darned in crewel huckaback is employed. Monochrome, or outline and grounding of the same shade, has been made effective. Darned-work is also used when the central ornament or design is appliqué. In any case, the art is one that no embroiderer of the present day can afford to do without.

Every lady, in driving about town for a morning of shopping, knows the inconvenience of little parcels that refuse to stay together on the carriage seat. A useful novelty, just introduced, is a carriage purse fitted with large ivory rings and lined with colored silk. One of these, in myrtle green velvet, was embroidered with sprays of jasmine and lined with pale yellow surah. Another, in black satin, was powdered with tiny embroidered peacock feathers, and lined with peacock blue satin. Still another, in dark blue plush, was lined with cardinal satin and trimmed with tassels of cardinal

silk. A purse of this kind may always be transferred to the arm of a drawing-room chair, and used to hold materials for embroidery. If economy is to be consulted, navy blue cashmere and dark red lining silk and tassels may be prettily combined; a monogram in red embroidered on one end. Ordinary curtain rings of wood or brass might serve to hold the purse together.

Another pretty bit of work is a card case of plush, embroidered with Japanese gold (which does not tarnish) in a Japanese design of flying storks and clouds. A blotter was made of velvet embroidered with Japanese gold, and lined with watered silk. A photograph frame worked in this way with gold on-velvet is very effective, if it is properly mounted by a professional hand. In all this embroidery of gold thread, wherever there are solid masses, it is better to do them separately, then transfer them to the plush. The long pile hides the transfer stitches, and lines, dots, or arrow-heads of gold can be added afterward.

An inexpensive table cover, and one easily made, is a square of dark-red billiard cloth or diagonal serge. Around the edge form a border of ivy-leaves cut from scraps of green velvet, serge, and cloth, appliqué and veined with a lighter shade of the silk. Work the stalks and vine in brown filoselle in feather (crewel) stitch. By taking a pattern in paper from a natural ivy leaf, and afterward cutting it from the material, any amateur can make a pretty design for herself.

The valance for a mantel-board can be made of resedas sateen inserted between two bands of olive serge or cloth. Work upon the sateen a continuous pattern of small sunflowers, which are as much in vogue as ever. For this, cut circles of golden-brown plush for the centres of the sunflowers, and work over them a sort of lattice-work of yellow silk threads, in long loose stitches, caught at the intersection. Add petals of yellow flannel or cloth, worked down with silk of the same shade in long stitches. Work a vine to connect the sunflowers in double brown crewel mingled with brown filoselle. Make foliage by cutting out the leaves from green serge and cloth in different shades, and grouping them, by the eye, along the vine. A drop of gum-tragacanth on the reverse side will secure these appliqué patterns in place until you are prepared to work them. If you like, a couching of green - brown

crewel, caught down with green silk, makes a good finish for the leaves, but an irregular buttonhole stitch, with veinings in silk, will suffice.

CONSTANCE CARY HARRISON.

## NOTES FOR ART NEEDLEWORKERS.

THE development of color schemes is one of the pleasant occupations of ladies of artistic tastes. The ground is usually a piece of brocade, with either self or colored figures, such as can be bought now in really excellent designs, however cheap may be the materials. These designs are overwrought with silk, and when completed are transformed, aside from their artistic merit, into really handsome fabrics. An example of this was recently seen in a curtain produced by the Society of Associated Artists. This was on old gold ground, with large flowers and foliage in a conventionalized design in blue. Beginning with the lower left hand corner of the curtain, the flowers were embroidered in blue, the shade of the brocade underneath. In shading, one tone suggested another, and this was re-

peated in the next flower, developing into purple and through that into pink, until a sweep of color went diagonally up and across the curtain, which was finally lost in the gold tints of the background. It is impossible to analyze closely such work as this for purposes of description, as the use of color in this way is so much a matter of feeling; but what has been said may have the effect of a suggestion. It will be observed that in this piece, crewels were used, silk only being introduced in the lighter tints. The leaves, it may be added, were only outlined in various shades of olive.

In smaller pieces silk is more appropriately used. Handsome table covers are made in this way. A piece of brocade with the ground of a desired shade may be the medium of any color scheme necessary to harmonize with the furnishing of an apartment. A piece of fawn-colored brocade, for example, with a design of carnations in light brown, is worked with silk, the colors being taken from nature. It is impossible to describe its blithe effect when strewn with gay crimson and pink flowers and foliage. Geometrical designs are equally effective. A table-cover of black brocade is divided into squares, with ornamental bars inclosing in alternate blocks a leaf and a circle, each subdivided by lines. These are overwrought, the bars with yellow and blue and the centres with shades of pink, preserving the outlines of the inclosed forms. In many places where ornamental work is sold, such pieces can be bought with sections wrought indicating the particular color scheme. But those who have given the matter any thought will readily be able to make this out for themselves.

Miss Townsend, whose work has been before noticed in this journal, has shown an exceptional skill in color in a piece of faint pink plush surrounded with a border of salmon plush. The decoration is a mass of crimson and white roses bursting out of wicker-work, simulated by strands of pink silk woven in and out. The roses are worked in crewels, the lighter tints with silk. The decoration begins in the lower left-hand corner in bright tones of pink and cream among the olives of the foliage, and is carried across the square in sprays, deepening into deeper crimson and olives on the border. The effect is at first only of a beautiful blending of colors; accompanying this, however, is perfect drawing and reproduction of natural forms, the studies having been made from nature.

There is a revival of patchwork, and in it are brought to bear some of the most advanced ideas in regard to color. A handsome portière from the Associated Artists, made to accompany a Moorish interior, consists of diamond mosaics forming a large figure. These diamonds are of changeable silks, a small interval apart in tone, set several rows deep about a centre of Oriental embroidery. The diamonds are shifted by alternating in the rows, the intersections marked by narrow rows of darker plush, and the effect is a subtle play of light about the jewel-like gleam of the centre. In using patchwork in geometrical forms, much is gained by avoiding contrasts in color, as it is that which gives the "splotchiness" which has brought patchwork into disfavor. Even in making silk quilts, out of innumerable scraps, it is worth while to keep together all those nearest in color, and work them into some definite relations with the whole.

Tidies which belie their names by refusing to be washed are rapidly growing into disfavor. The popular tidy is a strip or square of fine crash or sheer linen or cotton canvas, with the ends varied by bands of drawn work and embroidery in crewels. The embroidery is usually a light, delicate pattern, such as running vines, a design in outline stitch, or a single flower with its leaves in different positions. The flowers most frequently chosen are the daisy, wild rose, trailing arbutus, buttercup, violet, and more popular than all, the yel-

low field-flower, like a diminutive sun-flower. If the tidy is for a chair, the upper end is simply hemmed and the decoration is carried up the sides. For bureaus, both ends are embroidered and fringed. On Java canvas drawn work is very effective, with designs in Point Russe and Holbein stitch between the bands.

There is nothing more refined and beautiful than the present revival of old-fashioned drawn work. "Punto tirata," as it was called, originated with the Italians. Hem stitching, as it is known in its milder form, has long been in use here. Drawn work, as it is now produced, especially in the fine linens used as doilies, rivals lace in its delicacy. There is no limit to the household linen that can be ornamented in this dainty way. Many handsome tablecloths are further ornamented by bands of drawn work, and when in use are placed over a cloth of red cotton flannel. A tasteful buffet cloth—for all marble must now be covered—is finished with a band of deep drawn work and fringe, and has worked in old English text "Good Diet with Wisdom best Comforteth Man."

hangings, designed for embroidery in tapestry-stitch. Several handsome reproductions of old pictures have been made in this way. The material answers admirably for such purposes, as it permits the blending of colors and the gradations which are the properties chiefly of pigments. An original design produced in this way was a hanging for a yacht on blue tapestry cloth, representing a yellow-haired mermaid coquetting with a large fish.

H. G. M.

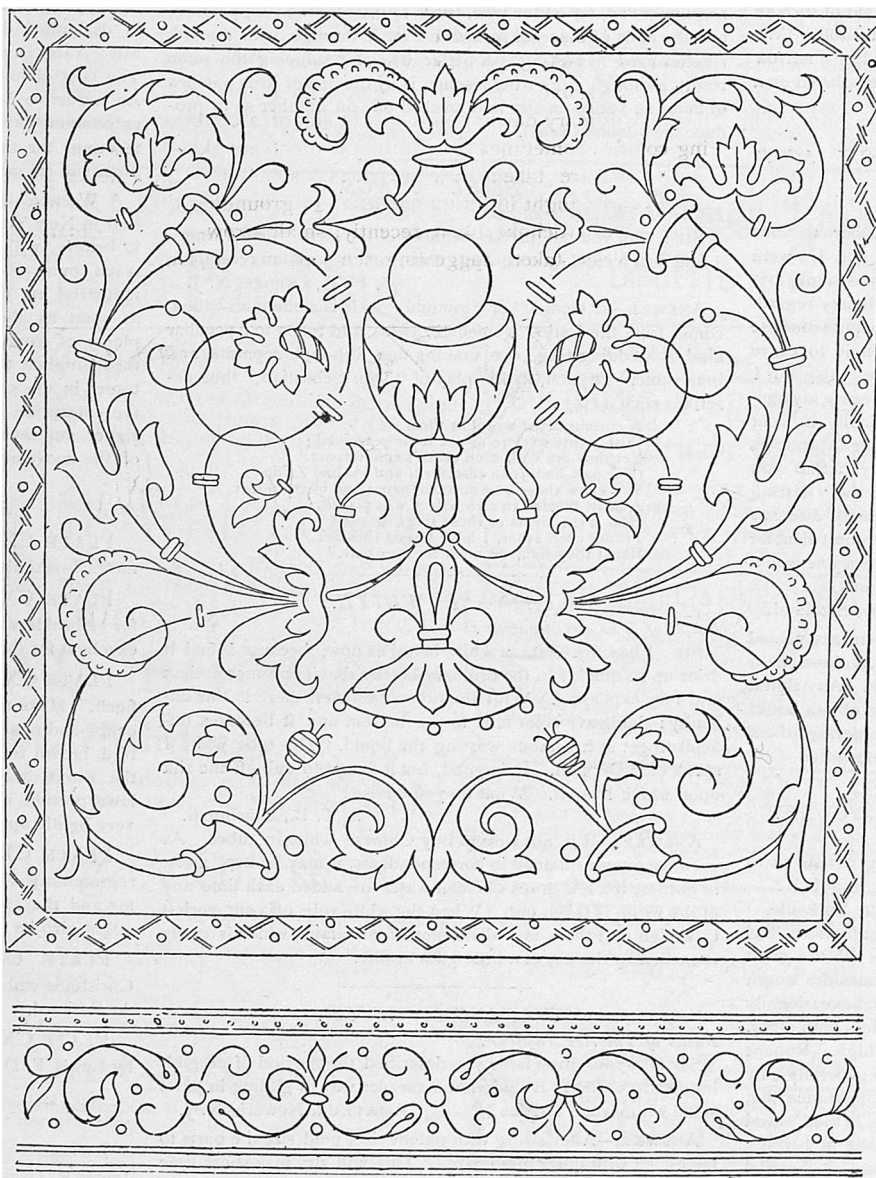
#### AN OXFORD EXHIBITION.

At an exhibition of art needlework which took place in Oxford, last May, the embroidery of four centuries was represented by an assemblage of beautiful specimens of the productions of many countries. From Wroxton Abbey a collection of magnificent objects was lent, including a satin quilt richly embroidered, once the property of Mary Queen of Scots, having her cipher M under a crown, and bearing two shields with

the Scotch lion and the French fleur-de-lis; a pair of large curtains in a fine pattern of festoons in wool and silk seventeenth-century work, one with a border of grandly drawn carnations springing from a pot; and a large cushion decorated with designs worked on canvas in silk, and applied to a white ground—a tree in the centre flanked by a stag couchant and a turkey-cock, and some beautifully drawn sprays of pear and apple branches and honeysuckle, interspersed with animals and insects. From Chastleton the earliest relic exhibited was a table-cover of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, with a beautiful design worked in fine crewels on linen of lilies, carnations, and roses; three remarkable chair-seats of the date of 1620 were of thick cut worsted, resembling eastern work; a quaint piece of tapestry bore family arms, and there was some fine stitched linen with a tambour pattern in shades of orange. From Settrington House, Yorkshire, came an Italian arabesque border, apparently of the seventeenth century, a combination of the needle and the brush, being of painted silk applied on a blue ground; a remarkable coverlet of old English netted work with designs of figures representing all the months of the year, slightly outlined in color; two large strips worked in old English cross-stitch in wool and silk, with a very effective arrangement of flowers and fruits; a fine quilt, bearing birds and flowers in crewels, worked in Holland; and an old German pillow-case and a court suit of the last century. Mr. Kempe sent a very perfect specimen of old German needlework on blue silk, flowers with a rich border; a curtain of fine German tent-

stitch, probably of the seventeenth century; and some linen from the same country embroidered quaintly in pink thread. Lady Erskine contributed the front of a lady's dress embroidered on silk in rich silver and silks in a graceful design of birds hovering over a cornucopia; it was worked for and worn by an Austrian archduchess, who was Governess of the Netherlands during part of the eighteenth century. Among the framed needlework were an exquisitely embroidered figure of a lady, a curious tent-stitch picture of Ahasuerus and Esther at supper, with Haman on the gallows in the background, and two other wonderful stitch pictures like line engravings, entirely the work of the needle.

THE small frames generally of iron covered with baize, upon which tambour work was executed, are still to be found in the lumber rooms of some English houses. They are simply two rings fitting pretty closely one within the other, sometimes with a screw at one side to keep the work steady. It is work which is very quickly done, and by no means to be despised, as it is susceptible of very artistic treatment in skilful hands.



TOP AND SIDE OF ITALIAN HOST-BOX OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

An interesting piece of embroidery produced by the Associated Artists is designed to show the possibility of giving art value to humble materials. The ground is ordinary brown holland, whose surface is worked over in a net-like design, with gold thread. On this are applied singly and in groups of two and three, discs of brown linen which had been previously embroidered in silk. The designs for these are from nature, and in drawing and coloring they are perfect. There are bunches of clover and leaves, groups of buttercups and violets, with butterflies, bees, and other insects, the design often running across the overlapping discs. These are outlined by couchings of three lines of gold flosselle. In other places color is again introduced in circles, through which run irregularly faint shades of antique colors. One of the advantages claimed for the piece is that it will wash, an advantage of the more value inasmuch as there is no limit to its durability.

The Associated Artists have undertaken the manufacture of artistic stuffs, among these silk momie cloths and raw silks of great beauty. The principal fabric, however, is a tapestry cloth for portières and wall